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## A "SYMPOSIUM" ON THE FAVORITE BOOK OF THE BIBLE.

It has seemed to not a few persons that while there is great interest in the Bible among Christian people, yet this interest is often narrow, confined to a few portions, or based upon grounds that appeal to something short of the whole nature of man. No little help, it was thought, might be furnished in broadening the outlook of many such persons by obtaining from some of the most capable and large minded ministers and teachers a statement concerning what to them, looking at the matter in a broad way, is the *favorite book of the Bible*. Kind and helpful replies have been received from many to whom requests have been sent by the Editor. Some of them are here given.

FROM GEORGE W. CABLE, ESQ.

My favorite book is John's Gospel. It seems to me the supreme flower of divine truth. It has to me the effect of being written to all the world and all time by one to whom all the other books of the Bible,—histories, psalms, laws, prophecies, gospels, epistles,—were known and had been duly pondered and appropriated. If I could say it so, I should prefer to say that my favorite book is John's Gospel and his First Epistle. It would do my mind no violence to call them one book.

My choice of John's Gospel, please note, is a choice of it *among*—not *out from*—the books of the Bible.

*Northampton, Mass.*

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FROM REV. W. H. P. FAUNCE.

The question, What is my favorite book in the Bible? is much like the question, What is my favorite article of food? The answer will depend much on the season of the year, the mood of mind and the state of heart. Judging by the amount of time I have spent in its study and the impression made on my own soul, I must say my favorite book is the First Letter to the Corinthians.

1. It is a marvelously graphic picture of the Christian society in the apostolic age.

2. It is a wonderful revelation of the great heart of Paul, unfolding not only his natural convictions, but even his natural sympathies and antipathies, his method of counsel and advice in difficult matters.

3. It is marvelously practical, being almost a compendium of applied Christianity.

4. It contains in a brief space all the essential historic facts concerning the life and death of Jesus.

5. It contains the finest statement ever made of true Christian liberty, its scope and its limitations.

6. It contains the finest poem of the New Testament, the exquisite description of Christian love.

7. It contains the positive though spiritual statement of the resurrection from the dead, unfolding glorious vistas of the life to come.

8. In its horizon extending from the ministry of Jesus to the judgment day, in its scope dealing with the most complicated problems of individual and social life, in its spirit the very incarnation of Christ—I could lose any other book of the Bible sooner than this.

*New York City.*

From WM. H. THOMSON, M. D.

In reply to your question which of the books of the Bible is my favorite, I find the answer difficult without qualifications as to particulars.

I find in Genesis every kind of interest, religious and general, which leads me very often to study it, frequently also in connection with the rest of the Pentateuch. For daily spiritual needs I would choose the Psalms. The Gospel of John would be my favorite but for critical (not doctrinal) difficulties suggested by its style.

*New York City.*

From Rev. EDWARD G. SELDEN.

I confess the difficulty of naming *the* favorite book, for special study at any given time makes a book the favorite for the time being. I have in this way been interested for months in Genesis. Just now I happen to be interested in the book of Ezra. It delights me week by week as I take up a fresh chapter, and yet it is not always so prominently in my thought and liking.

I prefer the New Testament to the Old. Luke I prefer of the synoptics, but John of the gospels. The epistles in turn have been favorites, but if I were to be shut up to one book—which I suppose is a fair way of testing myself—I should certainly take the Gospel of John.

I would keep that story of Christ's life because it gives at once the loftiest conception of spiritual being as realized in Him, and the profoundest searching of the human heart. The simplicity and beauty of the narrative are an unceasing wonder and delight. It is quite possible that one would rise to a higher estimate of the Fourth Gospel if it should become one's sole possession among the sacred writings.

*Springfield, Mass.*

From Pres. JOHN A. BROADUS, D. D.

As to the question What is my favorite book of the Bible, I should answer, The Gospels. I think History the most important of all studies, and the Bible consists very largely of History—in fact every portion of it needs to be studied historically. The center of Bible history is found in the Gospels. Every thing in the Old Testament in some sense points forward to the Gospel period, and everything else in the New Testament flows out of the Gospels. Jesus

Christ himself is not only the chief theme of Scripture, but the guarantee of its authority, the interpreter of its meaning. The Gospels rightly form the principal subject of youthful study in Sunday Schools, but the most intellectual, cultivated and truly wise will also find the Gospels in the highest degree interesting, convincing and instructive.

*Louisville, Ky.*

## Contributed Notes.

**Genesis XIV. 20; XV. 1.**—"And blessed be the Most High God, who hath *delivered* thine enemies into thy hand." [A. V.]

"And blessed be God, Most High, which hath *delivered* thine enemies into thine hand." [R. V.]

"Fear not Abram, I am thy *shield* and thy exceeding great reward." [A. V. and R. V.]

The critical word in these two passages is *Miggen*. It is pointed as a verb in the first passage and in the *Piel* form. In the second passage it is pointed as a noun. The Authorized Version and the Revised Version translate the verb by "hath delivered" and the noun by "shield." Luther's translation renders the verb "beschlossen hat" and the noun "schild," while Martin's French Version renders the verb "à livre," and the noun "bouclier." It is thus evident, that the most common modern versions are alike in the rendering of the word or words.

Quite hazardous, then, does it seem to proffer any different understanding of this word as used in the two passages, or rather a single signification for them both. Yet the Vulgate translation might naturally awaken inquiry. The verb is there represented by the absolute construction "quo protegente:" and the noun is expressed by "protector." The figure of a shield is omitted, or if at all present, it is in the idea of "hiding," "covering," found in the verb "protego." The bold metaphor "scutum" is carefully avoided by the translator of the Vulgate. Yet there can be no doubt but that he knew the employment of this figure, as an epithet of God in the Psalms. Turning to the LXX., we find a similar avoidance of the use of this bold metaphor, found in modern versions. The verb is translated by "*paradoke*" and the noun by "*huperaspizo*." The translation of the noun, although by a verb, reflects the idea of "shield," since it means "to place a shield over one." Yet it still stands true, that the translator of these passages, in the LXX. also would not allow here the boldness in metaphor, which we find in modern versions.

There are certain reasons, deducible from the narrative, why the metaphor would probably not have been employed. In that wonderful victory of Abram over the conquering kings, chief among whom was Chedorlaomer, the patriarch was the aggressor. He would attack, not they. His enemies would need the shield. He needed some power to deliver them into his hands. Hence the word *Magen* as a verb is correctly translated. It would also be difficult